

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of:

Modernizing the E-rate
Program for Schools and Libraries

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) WC Docket No. 13-184
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Comments of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops ("USCCB") respectfully submits these comments in the above referenced proceeding, released July 23, 2013.

USCCB urges the Commission to permanently increase the e-rate cap to at least \$5 billion. For the 2013 funding year, schools and libraries sought E-rate funding in excess of \$4.9 billion, more than twice the 2013 cap of \$2.4 billion. In 2012, the Universal Service Administrative Company released a funding demand estimate of \$5.237 billion for the 2012 funding year; \$2.444 billion was in Priority 1 requests, which exceeded the entire e-rate funding cap of \$2,338,786,577. Demand for services has exceeded the E-rate cap every year since the program's inception.

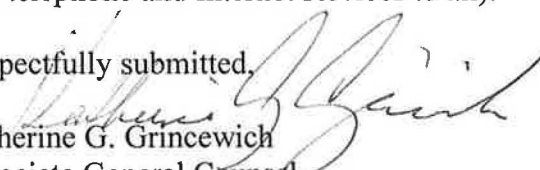
Lack of funding has real-world consequences for schools. Without adequate funding, more schools will be unable to purchase the types of technology support programs funded by the e-rate program in the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Boston, and the Diocese of Buffalo. The Archdiocese of Baltimore was able to increase bandwidth and offer wireless access. In one school, the Archdiocese was able to rewire with Category 5 cable, adding access points throughout the building to accommodate a server and more handheld devices. The Archdiocese of Boston used e-rate support to provide T1 connectivity to all classrooms in its 34 inner-city schools. In one Archdiocesan high school, e-rate discounts allowed the Archdiocese to wire the entire school for 3 megabyte Internet access, supporting three compute labs, a VoIP telephone network and videoconferencing services that allow students to take local community college calculus classes. The Diocese of Buffalo plans to use e-rate discounts to implement a wide area network to connect schools to each other as well as the Internet, adding video conferencing and library automation, and provide an interface for New York State reporting on standardized tests.

Unless the e-rate cap is raised to reflect the actual and growing needs of schools, these programs and plans will not be funded.

USCCB is a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the District of Columbia. All active Catholic Bishops in the United States are members of the USCCB. USCCB

advocates and promotes the pastoral teachings of the Bishops in such diverse areas as education, health care, social welfare, immigration, civil rights, family life and communications (including support for universal telephone and Internet services to all).

Respectfully submitted,



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United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops

September 16, 2013